

10 Ways to Be a Better Dad

Maintain Healthy Relationships

One of the best things a father can do for his children is to maintain healthy relationships. Whether the relationship is with the mother of his children or with other family and community members, fathers need the support of a healthy network of friends.

Spend Time with Your Children

How a father spends his time tells his children what's important to him. If you always seem too busy for your children, they will feel neglected no matter what you say. Treasuring children often means sacrificing other things, but the rewards are worth it.



Earn the Right to Be Heard

If the only time a father speaks to his children is when they have done something wrong, eventually they will stop listening. Begin having conversations with your children when they are young. The difficult subjects will be easier to talk about as they get older.

Discipline with Love

All children need guidance and discipline, not as punishment, but to set reasonable limits. Lovingly remind your children of the consequences of their actions and provide meaningful rewards for desirable behavior.

Be a Role Model

Fathers are role models to their kids whether they realize it or not. A girl who spends time with a loving father grows up knowing she deserves to be treated with respect. Fathers can teach sons that it is important to demonstrate honesty, humility and responsibility.

Be a Teacher

Often fathers think teaching is something others do. But a father who teaches his children about right and wrong, and encourages them to do their best, will see his children make good choices.

Eat Together as a Family

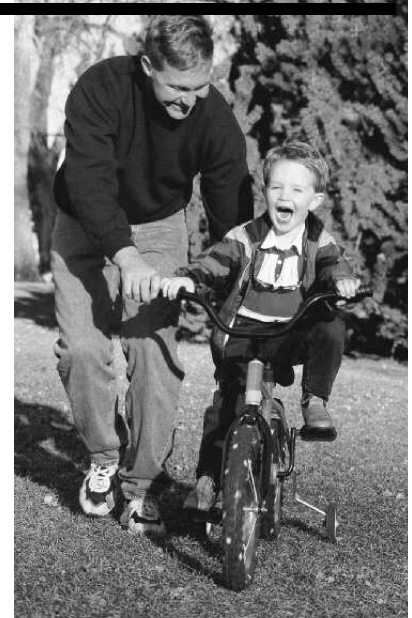
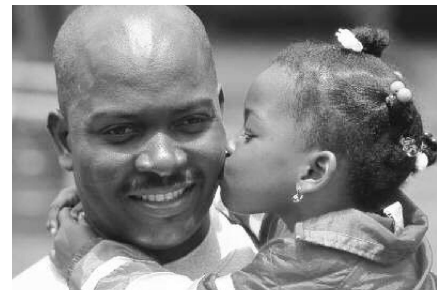
Sharing a meal together (breakfast, lunch or dinner) can be an important part of healthy family life. In addition to providing some structure in a busy day, it gives kids the chance to talk about what they are doing.

Read to Your Children

It is important that fathers make the effort to read to their children. Begin reading to your children when they are very young. When they are older encourage them to read on their own. By instilling a love for reading you increase their potential for a lifetime of personal and career growth.

Show Affection

Children need the security that comes from knowing they are wanted, accepted and loved. Parents, especially fathers, need to feel both comfortable and willing to hug their children. Showing affection everyday is one of the best ways to let your children know that you love them.



Realize that a Father's Job Is Never Done

Even after children have grown up, they will still look to their fathers for wisdom and advice. Whether it's about continued schooling, a new job or a wedding, fathers continue to play an essential part in the lives of their children.